come back to the League as our best hope. It may be plausibly argued that its existence in 1914 might have averted the World War. To adopt Professor Gilbert Murray's illuminating phrase, it is " an organ of consultation," ready for use by day or night like a fire brigade waiting for the call. That the Covenant is capable of amendment its authors themselves would never deny, but we should bear in mind the weighty declaration of M. Avenol, the Secretary-General, that it contains the minimum obligations of a Society of Nations. To override the smaller states would be to kill the League, which rests on the conception of equality of rights, not equality of power.

The increasing peril has brought the problem of preventing or defeating aggression into the foreground of discussion. The French proposal of an armed League was rejected when the Covenant was shaped, and was scarcely heard of during the years of recovery. To-day, as the skies darken, a League Air Force has many friends. The technical difficulties are immense; and while three Great Powers are outside the League, the discussion must remain academic. Moreover, the scheme is criticised both by those who fear that it might be misused and by those who object to the employment of force by the League at all. If the project has a future it can only be in a world where national armaments have been reduced to a police standard. The question of sanctions in other forms remains. A more binding obligation on the part of the signatories to share in a League war than that already embodied in Article 16 of the Covenant cannot be expected, and England at any rate is unwilling to go beyond her Locarno pledge. Regional pacts have in consequence sprung up and seem likely tq increase, for they meet specific needs by limited commit-ments. Development of the collective system

must for the present run along economic lines. A flagrant breach of the peace should be promptly met by a general refusal of munitions and. by the cessation of trade. That economic sanctions may provoke a declaration of war is a possibility; but whatever risks there may be in economic pressure must be balanced against the rival peril of encouraging aggression by a tacit assurance of immunity. Collective security is the only security.

A policy of isolation in an interdependent world is out of date. Alliances are as dangerous as isolation, for it was the precarious balancing of group against group that swept us into the abyss of 1914. Science has raced ahead while states-